

Message Text

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43

ACTION NEA-16

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 IO-14 ISO-00 NEAE-00 CIAE-00 PM-07 H-03

INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03

SS-20 USIA-15 SCCT-02 SAM-01 SAB-01 DRC-01 AID-20

/155 W

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P 191550Z JUN 74

FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8517

DIA PRIORITY

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

USINT DAMASCUS

USMISSION GENEVA

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV PRIORITY

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

USCINCEUR

C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 6941

GENEVA FOR MEPC DEL

LONDON FOR LAMBRAKES

EO 11652: NA

TAGS: PFOR PINS PMIL LE IS

SUBJ: LATEST ISRAELI AIR RAIDS ON LEBANON

REF: A DAL TEL AVIV 1318; B. DAO TEL AVIV 1319

1. LEBANESE ARMY G-2 HAS INFORMED DATT THAT TWO SEPARATE
IAF AIR STRIKES AT 1600 AND 2100 HOURS LOCAL JUNE 18 AGAINST
TARGETS IN 'ARQOUB AND ELSEWHERE IN SOUTHEASTERN LEBANON LEFT
ESTIMATED 50 FEDAYEEN DEAD AND APPROX SAME NUMBER
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WOUNDED. (NO INFO YET AVAILABLE RE EXTEND OF CASUALTIES INFLICTED

IN SUBSEQUENT ATTACKS MORING OF JUNE 19 REPORTED REFTEL B)
ALTHOUGH INITIAL ARMY COMMUNIQUE LISTED ONE LEBANESE CHILD AS
SLIGHTLY WOUNDED, G-2 AS YET UNABLE CONFIRM THAT ANY RPT ANY
LEBANESE CASUALTIES ACTUALLY TOOK PLACE. G-2 DID NOT SPECIFY
NUMBER OF AIRCRAFT INVOLVED IN JUN 18 RADIS, BUT WE UNDERSTAND
FROM OTHER SOURCES THAT AT LEAST A DOZEN TOOK PART. (LOCAL PRESS
REPORTS PUT FIGURE AS HIGH AS 38, BUT WE BELIEVE SUCH CLAIMS ARE
EXAGGERATIONS) G-2 ALSO REPORTS THAT ISRAELI ARTILLERY AND
MORTAR FIRE (H AND I) CONTINUED TO FALL NIGHT OF JUN 18-19 IN
WESTERN SECTOR OF LEBANESE-ISRAELI BORDER.

2. ARMY COMMUNIQUE ISSUED LATE JUN 18 SAID THAT FIRST IAF
ATTACKS WERE DIRECTED AGAINST AREAS IN AND AROUND SUCH
VILLAGES AS KHRAYBE AND FRAYDISS IN 'ARQOUB, AND RASHAYA AL
WADI, BAKKA, KFAR QOUQ AND YANTA IN MOUNTAINOUS RASHAYA
DISTRICT FURTHER NORTH. DEPT WILL RECALL THAT LATTER AREA HAS
LONG BEEN MAJOR FEDAYEEN SUPPLY DEPOT AND STAGING AREA, AND--
TOGETHER WITH 'ARQUOB--WAS SCENE OF CONCENTRATED IAF ATTACKS
IN 1971-72. WE HAVE NO INFO RE EXTENT OF DESTRUCTUON INFLICTED ON
LEBANESE VILLAGES AND FARMS DURING LATEST RAIDS, BUT EYE-WITNESS
REPORTS IN LOCAL PRESS CONTEND DAMAGE TO CROPS WAS CONSIDERABLE.

3. COMMENT: PRIVATE GOL REACTION INITIALLY APPEARS TO HAVE
BEEN LARGELY RELIEF THAT IAF RAIDS WERE BEING DIRECTED AGAINST
FEDAYEEN IN REMOTE AREAS SPARSELY POPULATED BY LEBANESE
CIVILIANS, ALTHOUGH THERE IS FEAR THAT CONTINUING AIR ATTACKS MAY
YET RESULT IN HEAVIER LEBANESE CASUALTIES AND PROPERTY DAMAGE.
AT SAME TIME, HOWEVER, WIDE SEGMENT OF PUBLIC OPINION--
ENCOURAGED BY LEFTIST AND PRO-FEDAYEEN CIRCLES BUT ALSO SPREAD
BY OTHER, MORE RATIONAL OBSERVERS, INCLUDING INDEPENDENT AND RIGHT-
WING PRESS-- HAS SEIZED ON NOTION THAT LATEST IAF RAIDS ARE
DIRECTLY LINKED WITH PASSAGES RE TERRORISM AND GUERRILLA ACTIVITY
CONTAINED IN JUNE 17 US-ISRAELI COMMUNIQUE, AND IS THUS
MORE PRONE THAN EVER TO CONCLUDE THAT US HAS GIVEN GOI "GREEN
LIGHT" TO ATTACK LEBANON. WE SUSPECT GOL LEADERSHIP WILL
EXPERIENCE DIFFICULTY IN REMAINING ALOOF FROM INTERNAL POLITICAL
PRESSURES GENERATED BY THIS VOCAL OUTCRY AND, AS IN PAST, WILL TRY
GIVE APPEARANCE OF TAKING SOME KIND OF "ACTION" IN ORDER TO
SATISFY PUBLIC OPINION.

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